

Delaware Begins COVID-19 Vaccinations in Long-Term Care Facilities

DPH received 7,800 doses of Pfizer BioNTech vaccine on Wednesday

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney and the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) on Thursday announced that Delaware is among the first states in the nation to begin vaccinating staff at long-term care facilities.

After [receiving](#) 7,800 doses of the Pfizer BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine at its warehouse in Kent County on Wednesday, DPH facilitated the delivery of the vaccine to three long-term care facilities owned and operated by Genesis Healthcare Inc., which is based out of Kennett Square, Pa. Genesis operates 400 skilled nursing centers and senior living communities in 26 states. The Delaware facilities that received the vaccine are located in Dover, Milford and Seaford. All three locations plan to start vaccinating staff Thursday.

*“We are all relieved to see that this vaccine has arrived at our long-term care facilities to protect Delaware’s most vulnerable citizens from COVID-19,” said **Governor John Carney**. “But we’re not through the woods yet. We still face a difficult winter surge of cases and hospitalizations. Stay vigilant until we can widely distribute the vaccine. Wear a mask. Don’t gather with friends or family outside your household. We’ll get through this.”*

We may have to continue to social distance and take other measures to keep our mothers, fathers and grandparents safe, but thanks to arrival of this vaccine, we can be assured that

they will be better protected from the virus at a time when it is spiking in our communities. I am grateful that Delaware is among the first to offer this protection.”

Residents will be able to begin receiving the vaccine the week of December 28, as part of vaccination efforts under the federal pharmacy program. Walgreens and CVS pharmacists are partnering with facilities to vaccinate residents. While the vaccine is shipped directly to the pharmacies from the federal level, doses come out of each state’s total allocation.

“Vaccination is the critical third leg of the stool, along with personal protective equipment and testing, in stemming the spread of COVID-19 in nursing homes and protecting residents and health care workers,” said **Richard Feifer, MD, MPH, FACP, Chief Medical Officer at Genesis**. “This is unquestionably the biggest vaccination effort ever undertaken, and we thank Governor John Carney for his support throughout this pandemic.”

Residents and staff at long-term care facilities have been one of the hardest-hit groups of the pandemic. Residents at long-term care facilities account for 1,736 of the state’s 47,929 positive coronavirus cases as of December 11. Long-term care residents account for 455 of the state’s 833 coronavirus deaths, as of December 11. That is slightly more than half.

DPH Director Dr. Karyl Rattay, who was at the DPH Kent County warehouse when the additional vaccine doses arrived, was grateful that the Delaware is able to begin vaccinating its long-term care facilities.

“Since March, many of us have not been able to visit with our parents and grandparents as we have tried to protect them from the virus the only tools available to us masks and social distancing,” said **Dr. Karyl Rattay**. “This vaccine not only offers our seniors and long-term staff protection from the virus, it gives us hope that one day soon we will be able to

visit with our loved ones again. It also means more of us will be here to celebrate the holidays next year. I am grateful Delaware is able to do this for its long-term care residents."

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